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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND  
POLICY COMMITTEE

March 7, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The revelation that hosts and executives at Fox News Channel knowingly spread lies about the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election constitutes one of the largest media scandals in history. Those lies were a toxic accelerant of conspiracy theories that contributed to a violent attempt to overthrow American democracy. The embers of the fires spread by these lies can be tied directly to the January 6, 2021 attack on the United States Capitol. Therefore, I call on you today to use the powers of your office to ensure publicly displayed televisions throughout the Capitol complex for visitors and staff are no longer required to tune into this discredited network.

The details of Fox News' war on facts are stunning. Speaking under oath in an ongoing lawsuit against the station, Fox News' owner Rupert Murdoch acknowledged that several of his on-air hosts "endorsed at times this false notion of a stolen election" and noted that hosts including Maria Bartiromo, Jeanine Pirro, Lou Dobbs, and Sean Hannity made "endorsement[s] of a stolen election."<sup>1</sup> When asked why his station kept giving airtime to a known propagator of election lies, Mr. Murdoch replied that "[i]t is not red or blue, it is green,"<sup>2</sup> indicating his station aired lies to make money. Similarly, legal disclosures show that primetime Fox News hosts Tucker Carlson, Laura Ingraham, and Hannity knew the content and guests promoting a so-called stolen election were lies but did little to stop them or say so publicly. In clear effect, Fox News lied repeatedly to its audience to attack American democracy.<sup>3</sup>

Fox News' lies matter to all Americans, and in Congress we are no exception. As you know, in our Capitol complex, we have televisions posted throughout out the buildings, including

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<sup>1</sup> Oliver Darcy and Jon Passantino, *Rupert Murdoch Acknowledged That Fox News Hosts Endorsed False Stolen Election Claims*, CNN (Feb. 28, 2023), <https://www.cnn.com/2023/02/27/media/dominion-fox-news/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Reimann, *Not Red Or Blue, It Is Green': Murdoch Admits Fox News Hosts Pushed False Election Fraud Claims*, FORBES (Feb. 27, 2023), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicholasreimann/2023/02/27/not-red-or-blue-it-is-green-murdoch-admits-fox-news-hosts-pushed-false-election-fraud-claims/?sh=164d31912ad4>

<sup>3</sup> Richard Luscombe, *Fox News Hosts Thought Trump's Election Fraud Claims Were 'Total BS', Court Filings Show*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 17, 2023), <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2023/feb/17/fox-news-hosts-dominion-lawsuit-trump-election-fraud-tucker-carlson-sean-hannity-laura-ingraham>

in the Longworth Cafeteria, Rayburn Cafeteria, Dunkin Donuts, Au Bon Pain, and the Subway sandwich shop. Before the start of the 118th Congress, the public television sets were generally tuned into a smattering of different stations. However, since your ascension to the speakership it appears that when operating, the publicly displayed televisions are mostly tuned into Fox News. The House Administration Committee has confirmed on Twitter that the change instituted was at the direction of the majority.<sup>4</sup>

The public television sets are shown to thousands of visitors from across America who come to meet their congressmembers, and to our staff members who help us manage and administer America's government and economy and provide for our nation's safety. Asking Americans visiting our complex to receive news about current events from this station is little different from requiring them to tell the time from a broken clock. Forcing visitors and staff members to be exposed every day to false information is a grave disservice to our institution and a dereliction of our duties.

With a reach and technical slickness unmatched in media, we cannot underestimate Fox News' power. If a so-called news station will tell lies about the legitimacy of America's most important election, who knows what else it will tell lies about.

All of us in Congress experienced firsthand the terrible impact of election lies when our Capitol was ransacked on January 6, 2021. On that dark day, the lives of those serving in the Congress, our staff, and those sworn to protect us and our institution were threatened and the fate of democracy in America hung precariously from extinguishment. Many of the criminals that stood in the Capitol that day were acting on the lies they heard every day on Fox News.

Democracy exists on a bedrock of truth. Lies about democracy are a sledgehammer to that foundation. You can set a strong example against the spewing of lies seeking to destabilize our democracy by removing the mandate that televisions publicly displayed in our Capitol complex only broadcast Fox News Channel. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Pascrell Jr." in a cursive style.

Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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<sup>4</sup> See House Administration Committee (@House Admin), TWITTER (Feb. 6, 2023, 6:05 PM), <https://twitter.com/HouseAdmin/status/1622733267198742529?s=20>